

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 AID-20 DRC-01 /130 W

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R 042052Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6463

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 0918

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: CONTINUED CRITICISM OF GOH REFORM PLANS

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 0836

1. ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN TIEMPO ON MARCH 4 STATES THAT "FORCES" OPPOSED TO THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN HAD STARTED INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AIMED AT DISCREDITING THE REFORM PLANS OF THE LOPEZ REGIME. STORY STATED THAT FULL PAGE AD HAD BEEN PURCHASED IN LA HORA OF GUATEMALA CITY TO PUBLISH STATEMENTS CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT. STATEMENTS INCLUDED THOSE OF ROBERTO RAMIREZ, PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COURT AND FERNANDO LARDIZABAL, PRESIDENT OF THE CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION, DECLARING THEIR OPPOSITION TO AN AGRARIAN REFORM PROPOSED THAT HAD BEEN LEAKED TO THE PUBLIC BUT WHICH HAD NOT BEEN APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT. AD ALSO INCLUDED STATEMENT BY RAFAEL BARDALES BUESO, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONALIST PARTY, CRITICIZING THE ILLEGITIMATE AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL NATURE OF THE REGIME.

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2. LARDIZABAL MADE STATEMENT ON MARCH 4 THAT DENIED ANY

INVOLVEMENT IN PAYING FOR AD AND SAID THAT HE HAD NEVER CALLED THE GOVERNMENT PRO-COMMUNIST. HE COMMENTED THAT THE LAND OWNERS AND CATTLEMEN HAVE THE SAME RIGHT AS ANY OTHER SECTOR OF SOCIETY TO DEFEND THEIR RIGHTS AND IN CRITICIZING THE AGRARIAN REFORM PROPOSAL THEY WERE DOING NO MORE THAN EXERCISING THOSE RIGHTS. HE REMARKED THAT HE WAS ALSO OPPOSED TO HAVING HONDURAN INTERNAL DIFFERENCES AIRED IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

3. AN EDITORIAL IN LA PRENSA ON MARCH 3 STATES THAT LOPEZ WHILE IN PANAMA ON HIS RECENT VISIT, REMARKED THAT THE REESTABLISHMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER IS DESIRED BY THE HONDURAN PEOPLE. THE EDITORIAL DECLARES THAT IT FULLY AGREES WITH A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY RATHER THAN A CONTINUANCE OF THE PRESENT DE FACTO SITUATION. IT EMPHASIZES THAT HONDURANS SHOULD BE ABLE TO ELECT THEIR OWN LEADER AS STATED IN THE CONSTITUTION AND THAT LEGITIMACY CAN BE CONFERRED ONLY IN THAT WAY.

4. COMMENT: THE PAID AD IN LA HORA WAS PROBABLY PLACED BY EITHER REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR CONCERNED ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF THE GOH REFORM PLANS OR BY THE NATIONALIST PARTY. THE CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH ITS COUNTERPARTS IN NICARAGUA AND GUATEMALA TO EXPLAIN ITS POSITION IN REGARD TO AGRARIAN REFORM. NATIONALIST PARTY PRESIDENT, RAFAEL BARDALES BUESO, RECENTLY TOLD EMBOFF THAT PARTY INTENDS TO SEND EMISSARIES TO NICARAGUA AND GUATEMALA TO EXPLAIN THEIR OPPOSITION TO "PRO-COMMUNIST" TENDENCIES OF LOPEZ GOVERNMENT. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT SUCH ACTIVITIES CAN DO LITTLE BUT CAUSE CONCERN TO THOSE GUATEMALAN AND NICARAGUAN LEADERS WHO ARE ALREADY WORRIED ABOUT GOH PLICIES.
SANCHEZ

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